



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE PALACE AT NIPPUR

BABYLONIAN, NOT PARTHIAN

IN the *Journal* of October–December, 1904 (Vol. VIII, pp. 403–432) under the title ‘The Mycenaean Palace at Nippur,’ Mr. Clarence S. Fisher argued that the palace with the court of columns on the western mound of the Nippur hills showed in its construction the influence of Mycenaean art, and assigned it, as I had done, to a date of approximately 1200 B.C. In a rejoinder to this article in the *Journal* of January–March, 1905 (pp. 7–10), Professor Allan Marquand, under the title ‘The Palace at Nippur not Mycenaean but Hellenistic,’ answers Mr. Fisher’s article, endeavoring to show that the construction is Hellenistic and late, not Mycenaean and early, and dating it therefore a thousand years later than Mr. Fisher and I had done.

In my original account of the portion of this building which I discovered, in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, First Series, Vol. X, 1895, pp. 439 ff., as in my *Nippur*, Vol. II, Chapter 6, I noted the late Greek character in the architecture and stated that, on that account, I at first supposed the building to be late, and only because of the conclusive evidence of the impossibility on physical grounds of such a date I finally reached the conclusion there stated. As Professor Marquand has pointed out, Professor Hilprecht, in his *Explorations in Bible Lands* (p. 337), assigns the building “without hesitation to the Seleucido-Parthian period, about 250 B.C.” He alludes incidentally to a Parthian coin found in an unbaked brick. Inasmuch as the architect of the expedition has no knowledge of any such dis-

covery and Professor Hilprecht does not state where this brick was found, whether loose in the earth or built into some wall, nor what was the actual date of the coin, etc., I am inclined to think that there is here some error. In fact, Professor Hilprecht himself mentions only incidentally the discovery of the coin and lays no stress upon it. His real argument for the Seleucido-Parthian origin of the building is, as with Professor Marquand, its Hellenistic character, by which, as already stated, I had also been impressed. Professor Hilprecht paid no attention, as I think Mr. Fisher has made clear, to the physical impossibility, in view of the stratification, of such a date. Professor Marquand disregards the stratification, discounting its value in determining date, partly because, I think, he does not quite realize the actual situation of the building when discovered, and partly because he does not take into account the peculiar conditions of Babylonian excavation. He says: "Into the argument based upon strata we cannot enter here. Inferences based upon the levels where objects are found have proved valueless in so many cases that we needs must have evidence of indubitable superposition, as for example, when walls are built upon old foundations, before we can feel assured of chronological succession." The main material of a Babylonian building being adobe or unburned brick, the only thing that is done before proceeding to build another building is to level off the site; no foundations are required, and former walls have no value. The tests of superposition here are quite different from those applicable in Greek or Italian ruins. Mr. Fisher has shown satisfactorily, I think, the physical impossibility of ascribing this building to the post-Babylonian period. Perhaps, however, without a contour map the full force of that evidence cannot be made clear to one unfamiliar with the site. In the *débris* above the palace were found, *in situ*, archives of the Babylonian period, the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.; namely, the archives of the Murashu firm, while on the level of the palace were discovered, also *in situ*, archives of the Cassite period.

Mr. Fisher has called attention in the article already mentioned to the peculiar nature of Babylonian mounds, washed into gullies by the rains and built upon at all sorts of odd levels. The Court of Columns itself lay near the surface, on the side of the hill, where the rains had washed away the upper strata, or such of them as had ever existed. Here the stratification was of little assistance. Immediately to the westward of this court, however, the hill rose rapidly, so that between the surface of the hill and the floor level of the greater part of the building there was an accumulation of thirty-seven feet of *débris*, with a very distinct and unmistakable stratification. It was only a very small part of the building, then, which, by the accident of gulying, had been brought close to the surface. The actual stratification, with three successive pavements and all the evidences of a long period of occupancy resulting in the accumulation of thirty-seven feet of *débris*, was found over far the greater part of this building. Now, while it is always possible that through some disturbance of the surface later remains may find their way down into earlier strata, it is not possible that a whole building could in any way be pushed under later strata. But this is what must be supposed to have taken place here if Professor Hilprecht's and Professor Marquand's theory be accepted.

I am keenly alive to the peculiarly Hellenistic character of the Court of Columns which we found in our first expedition and also to the fact that the building as a whole is for Babylonia quite *sui generis*. As to the cause of this, I am, in the present condition of our knowledge of Babylonian architecture, frankly agnostic. I cannot, however, escape the conclusion that the building is to be dated, on the clear evidence of the excavations, approximately as I dated it.

JOHN P. PETERS.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, NEW YORK,
September 5, 1905.